

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

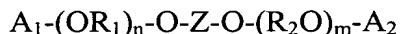
Claim 1-32 (Canceled).

Claim 33 (Currently Amended): A method for producing a liquid crystal optical element, which comprises:

sandwiching a mixture of a liquid crystal with an uncured curable composition ~~compound~~ between a pair of substrates which are provided with transparent electrodes and of which at least one is transparent, and

curing the curable ~~compound~~ composition to form a liquid crystal/cured composite layer,

wherein the curable ~~compound contains~~ composition comprises a compound of the formula (1):



Formula (1)

wherein each of A_1 and A_2 ~~which are independent~~ independently of each other, is an acryloyl group, a methacryloyl group, a glycidyl group or an allyl group; each of R_1 and R_2 ~~which are independent~~ independently of each other, is a C_{2-6} alkylene group; Z is a bivalent mesogen structure; and each of n and m ~~which are independent~~ independently of each other, is an integer of from 1 to 10,

wherein the curable ~~compound contains~~ composition comprises a curable compound ~~containing~~ having a mesogen structural portion ~~in its molecule~~ and a curable compound ~~containing~~ having no mesogen structural portion.

Claim 34 (Previously Presented): The method for producing a liquid crystal optical element according to Claim 13, wherein Z is a 4,4'-biphenylene group, or a 4,4'-biphenylene group having part or all of hydrogen substituted by C₁₋₂ alkyl or halogen atoms.

Claim 35 (Previously Presented): The method for producing a liquid crystal optical element according to Claim 33, wherein each of R₁ and R₂ which are independent of each other, is an ethylene group or a propylene group.

Claim 36 (Previously Presented): The method for producing a liquid crystal optical element according to Claim 33, wherein each of A₁ and A₂ which are independent of each other, is an acryloyl group or a methacryloyl group.

Claim 37 (Previously Presented): The method for producing a liquid crystal optical element according to Claim 33, wherein each of n and m which are independent of each other, is from 1 to 4.

Claim 38 (Currently Amended): The method for producing a liquid crystal optical element according to Claim 33, wherein the curable ~~compound contains~~ composition comprises two types of different curable compounds, of which the molecular weights are different by at least two times.

Claim 39 (Currently Amended): The method for producing a liquid crystal optical element according to Claim 38, wherein the two ~~types of different~~ curable compounds have curable sites ~~connectable to~~ that can be bonded to each other.

Claim 40 (Previously Presented): The method for producing a liquid crystal optical element according to Claim 38, which contains a curable compound having a molecular weight of at least 1,000.

Claim 41 (Currently Amended): The method for producing a liquid crystal optical element according to Claim 33, wherein the mixture ~~contains~~ further comprises a chiral agent.

Claim 42 (Currently Amended): The method for producing a liquid crystal optical element according to Claim 33, wherein the mixture ~~contains~~ further comprises a chiral agent, and the helical pitch of the chiral agent is at least 4 μm and at most three times of the electrode gap.

Claim 43 (Previously Presented): The method for producing a liquid crystal optical element according to Claim 42, wherein the electrode gap is from 4 to 50 μm .

Claim 44 (Previously Presented): The method for producing a liquid crystal optical element according to Claim 42, wherein the helical pitch is at least 5 μm and at most two times of the electrode gap.

Claim 45 (Currently Amended): The method for producing a liquid crystal optical element according to Claim 33, wherein the mixture ~~contains a very small amount~~ comprises from 1 to 10 wt.% of a curing catalyst.

Claim 46 (Currently Amended): The method for producing a liquid crystal optical element according to Claim 33, wherein a plurality of compounds of the formula (1) wherein n and m are different, ~~are used in combination~~ are present in the curable composition.

Claim 47 (Previously Presented): A liquid crystal optical element produced by the method as defined in Claim 33.

BASIS FOR THE AMENDMENT

Claims 33-47 are active in the present application. Independent Claim 1 has been amended for clarity. The amendment to independent Claim 33 for clarity is not intended to further limit the claimed subject matter. The dependent claims have been amended for clarity and for consistency with amended Claim 33. No new matter is believed to have been added.